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For Immediate Release**

A New Years Resolution That Could Save Your Life

Every January many Alaskans reflect on the previous year and try to make “New Year resolutions” to make changes in the New Year. Some examples would be to lose weight, spend more time with the family, get a new job, exercise more, etc. Mahlon Greene, Public Education Coordinator for the Alaska Division of Fire and Life Safety, would like to offer a “New Year resolution” that might save you and your family’s life in 2012. “I will install, test and maintain smoke alarms on each floor, in each bedroom and outside all sleeping areas in my home”.

Greene says smoke alarms can mean the difference between life and death in a fire. According to the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), working smoke alarms cut the chance of dying in a fire in half. Meanwhile, roughly two-thirds of all home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no *working* smoke alarms. “Smoke alarms detect and alert people to fire in its early stages, giving people the time needed to escape safely,” says Greene. “That’s why it’s so important for every home to have them in all recommended locations, including bedrooms.”

Eleven Alaskan’s lost their lives in fires in 2011. Ten of these fatalities were in residential structures and the most alarming statistic is that six out of the ten were in homes with no working smoke alarms. Greene added, “Working smoke alarms might have alerted these victims in time to escape the fire”.

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The Alaska Division of Fire and Life Safety offers the following tips for making sure the smoke alarms in your home are maintained and working properly:

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home.
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button and make sure everyone in your home knows their sound.
- If an alarm “chirps,” warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- Replace all smoke alarms, including alarms that use 10-year batteries and hard-wired alarms, when they’re ten years old (or sooner) if they do not respond properly when tested.
- Draw an escape plan for your home and practice it regularly by activating your smoke alarms.
- Sign up for free monthly email reminders to test your smoke alarms at www.akburny.com

Alaska State Fire Marshal David Tyler adds, “fire safe behavior can keep a fire from starting. Working smoke alarms, planning and practicing your fire escape plan and adding residential fire suppression sprinklers can ensure your family’s safety in case of a devastating home fire”.

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